

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 ACDA-07 /091 W
-----232144Z 055131 /67

R 231235Z MAR 77
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8813
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 0435

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, IS, EG
SUBJ: ISRAELI ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH CENTRAL SINAI

1. RELIABLE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCE HAS GIVEN US
ACCOUNT OF ISRAELI ACTIVITIES AND PLANS IN THE
VICINITY OF ST. CATHERINE'S MONASTERY IN CENTRAL SINAI.

2. IN THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, ISRAELIS HAVE GREATLY
IMPROVED ROAD IN WADI SAAL FROM JUNCTION ON MAIN
HIGHWAY 30 KMS. SOUTH OF NUWEIBA TO MT. SINAI AIR-
STRIP. ALTHOUGH ROAD IS NOT HARD SURFACE, IT HAS BEEN
IMPROVED IN MANY PLACES TO A WIDTH OF 15 METERS AND
GRADED. ROAD ALSO CONTINUES ON EAST SIDE OF MAIN
HIGHWAY DOWN TO GULF OF AQABA.

3. SOURCE REPORTS ISRAELIS SPEAK OF POSSIBLY ASPHALTING
NEW ROAD AND OF SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN TOURISTS UP TO
3-4,000 A DAY DURING PEAK SEASON. IN ORDER TO
ACCOMMODATE SUCH NUMBERS, RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES
BELIEVE ISRAELIS WOULD HAVE TO CONSTRUCT TOURIST
ACCOMMODATIONS IN VICINITY OF MONASTERY IN ADDITION
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TO EXISTING FILED SCHOOL.

4. RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES CONCERNED. UNTIL RECENTLY,
THEY HAD ASSUMED AREA WOULD EVENTUALLY REVERT TO
EGYPT IN A FINAL SETTLEMENT. UPGRADING OF ROAD
AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW TERMINAL AT SINAI AIRSTRIP
CAUSES THEM TO WONDER IF ISRAELIS PREPARED WITHDRAW FROM

CENTRAL SINAI IN THE CONTEXT OF AN OVERALL AGREEMENT.

5. TO DATE, RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES AT MONASTERY HAVE OFFERED PASSIVE RESISTENCE TO WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE ISREALI ENCROACHMENT ON PROPERTY TRADITIONALLY BELONGING TO THE MONASTERY. GIVEN SCOPE OF CURRENT ISRAELI THINKING, SOURCE IS OF THE OPINION THAT DIFFERENT TACTICS MAY HAVE TO BE ADOPTED WHICH COULD, AS IN THE CASE OF MT. ST. ATHOS, TAKE THE FORM OF CLOSING MONASTERY TO VISITORS WITHOUT SPECIAL PERMISSION.
NEWLIN

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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